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TAGS: [PREL](#) [VT](#)
SUBJECT: POPE RAPS MAPUTO PROTOCOL, PLAN OF ACTION

REF: (A) 06 STATE 185262 (B) 06 VATICAN 251

CLASSIFIED BY: Christopher Sandrolini, Charge d'affaires, EXEC, State.

REASON: 1.4 (d)

[¶1.](#) (U) Pope Benedict XVI criticized the Maputo Protocol and related Plan of Action (reftels and septel) in his high-profile January 8 address to diplomats accredited to the Holy See. Addressing "attacks on life", the pope said that such attacks "do not even spare regions with a traditional culture of respecting life, such as Africa, where there is an attempt to trivialize abortion surreptitiously, both through the Maputo Protocol and through the Plan of Action adopted by the Health Ministers of the African Union - shortly to be submitted to the Summit of Heads of State and Heads of Government."

[¶2.](#) (C) We have been working with Holy See Director for African Union (AU) issues Monsignor Ruben Dimaculangan on this issue since receiving ref (a). Dimaculangan (who wrote the passage above) told us January 8 that he was pleased that the comments had made it into such a prominent papal speech. He thanked us again for our support and said was also aware of contact on the issue in Washington with Papal Nuncio Archbishop Sambi. As reported previously (ref b) the Holy See is working on the issue through their African nunciatures. Dimaculangan told us that letters outlining the Holy See's concerns had been delivered to all the relevant Holy See missions; he expected follow-up soon, especially in light of the pope's remarks. He said that the Holy See had not decided on a representative to attend the AU summit, but guessed that Archbishop Moliner Ingles Ramiro, nuncio to Ethiopia, would be the most likely choice.

SANDROLINI